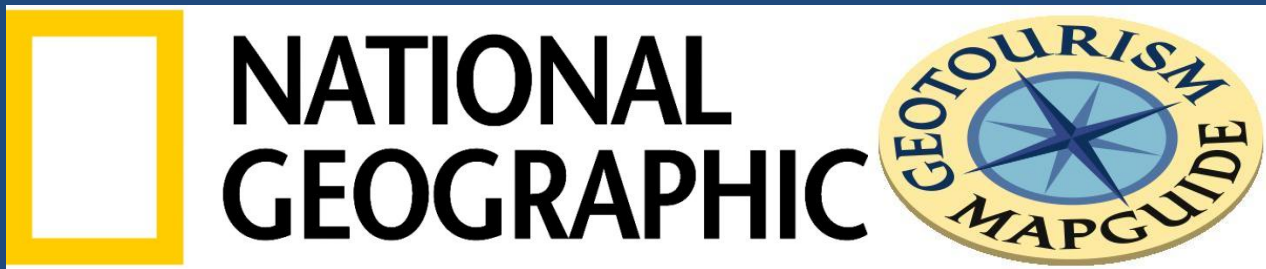


# Geotourism Project Updates



Dylan Boyle & Tim O'Donoghue  
Montana Governor's Conference  
March 25-26, 2013  
Helena, Montana

# Organization of Presentation

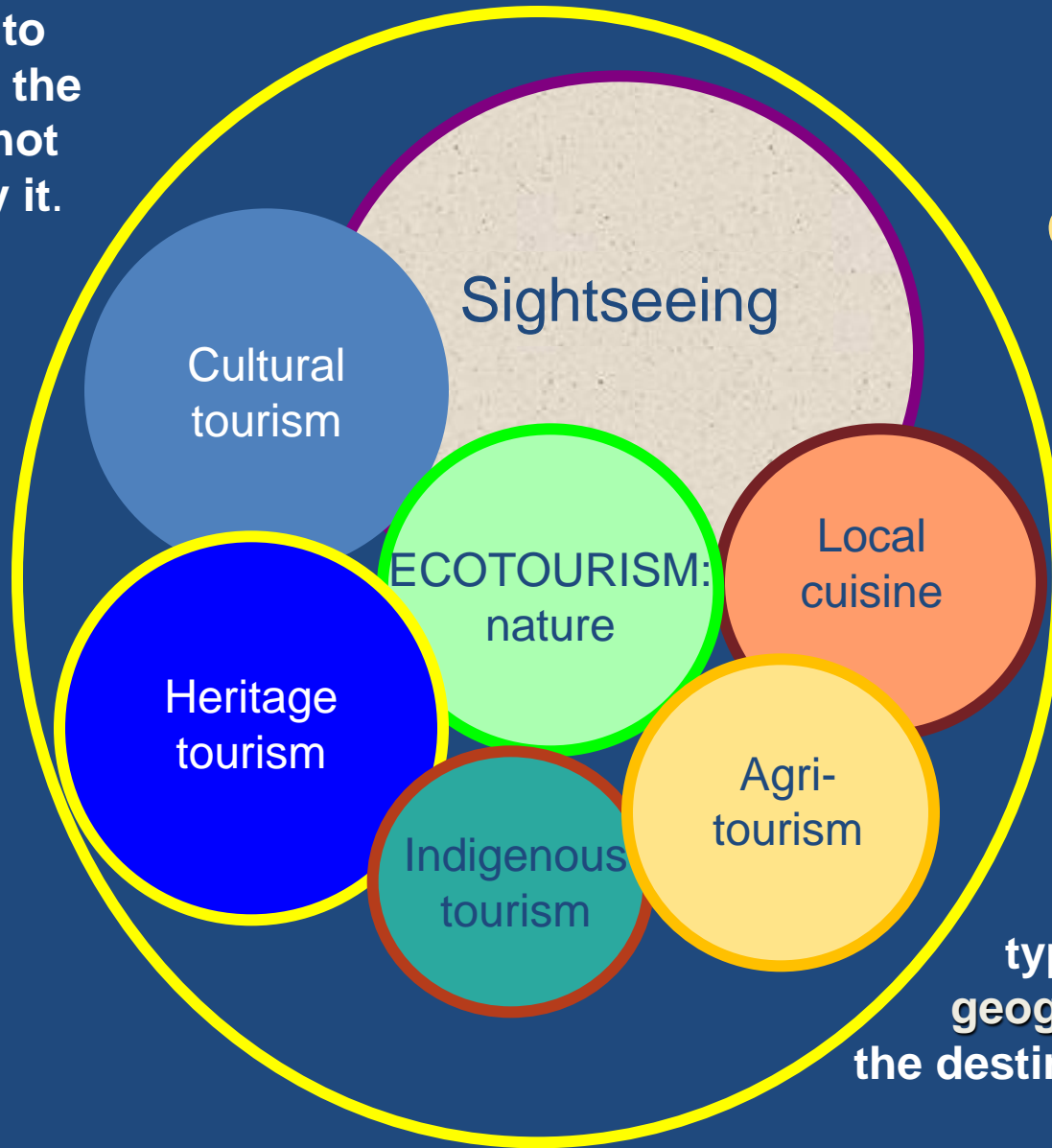
- What is geotourism?
- Who are geotravelers?
- Crown of the Continent Geotourism Project
- UnCommon Sense Business Leadership Program
- Greater Yellowstone Geotourism Project
- Sustainability
- Q & A

# What is Geotourism?

- “Tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place- its environment, heritage, aesthetics, culture, and well being of its residents”
- Encompassing version of tourism which provides an authentic travel experience.



Manage  
tourism so that  
it *pays* to  
protect the  
place, not  
destroy it.



## GEOTOURISM

All place-based  
types of tourism need  
geographical character=  
the destination AS A WHOLE

# What is Geotourism?





# The Product is the Place!



# *Destination Stewardship IS Wise Tourism*





# Who are Geotravelers?





# Who are Geotravelers?



# Who are Geotravelers





# Who are Geotravelers

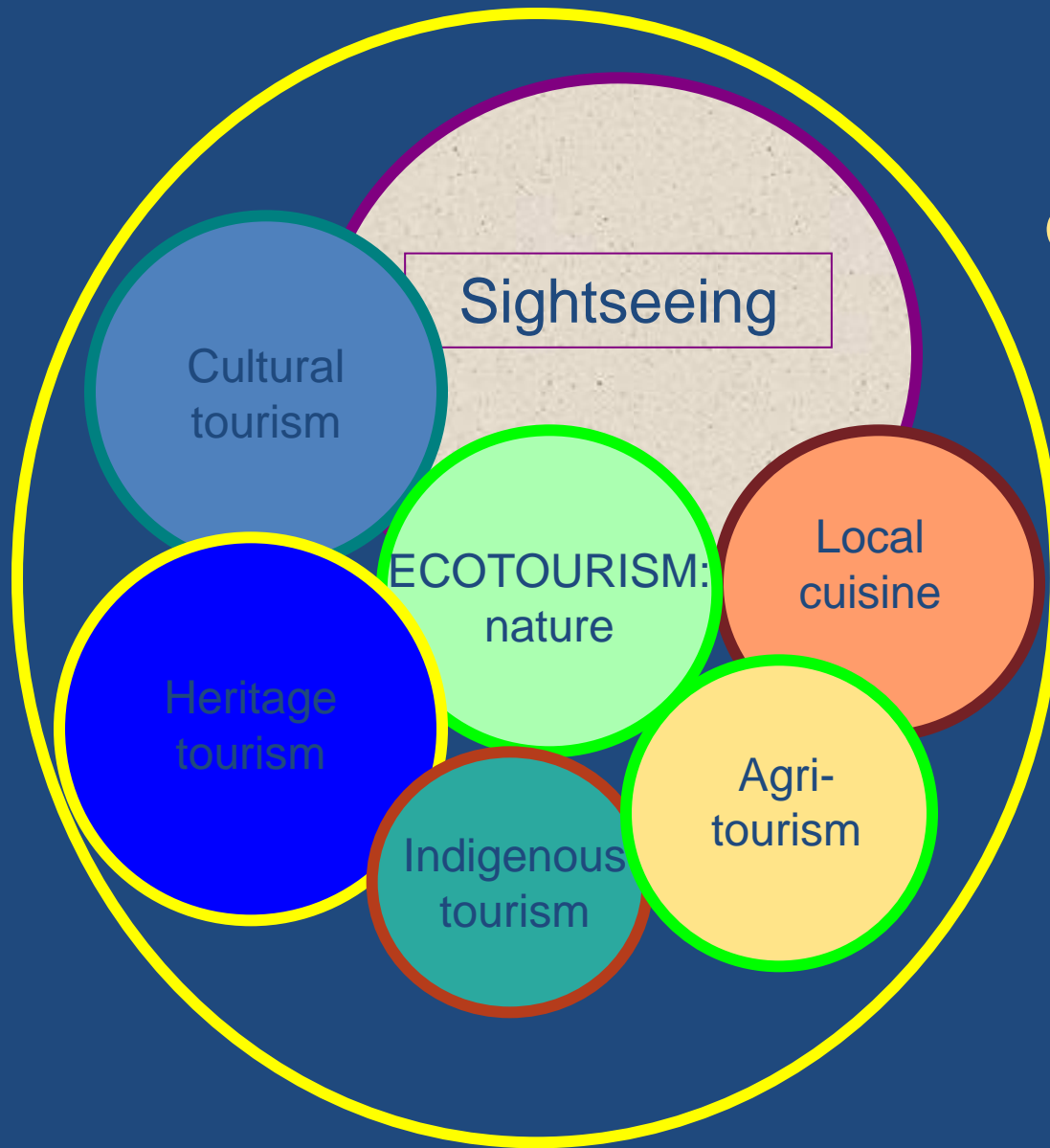


# Who are Geotravelers





*There is not a single  
“Geotraveler”*



## GEOTOURISM

# Who are Geotravelers?

- Various income and age ranges
- Variety of interests while traveling
- Common bond is an immersion in the uniqueness of the place
- 55 million geotravelers in the U.S.
- Millions more worldwide



# Why Geotourism in the Northern Rockies?

- Intact Ecosystem
- Rich culture and heritage
- Unique communities
- Experiences that cannot be had anywhere else in the world



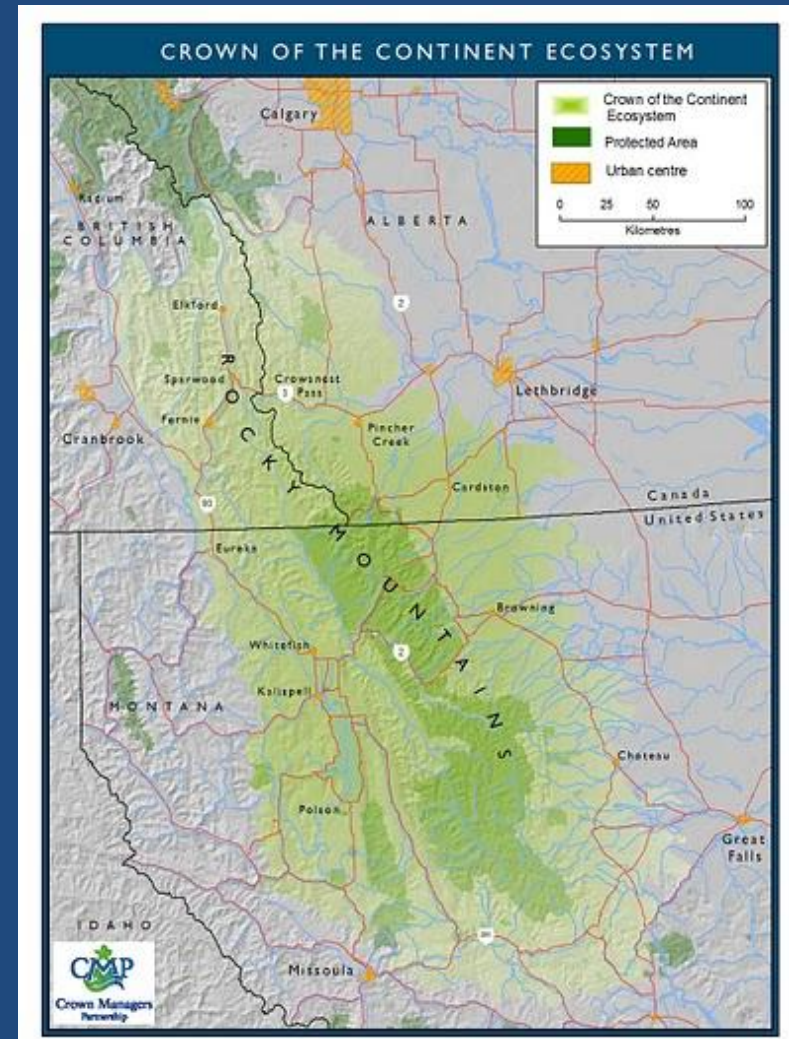


# Crown of the Continent Geotourism Council



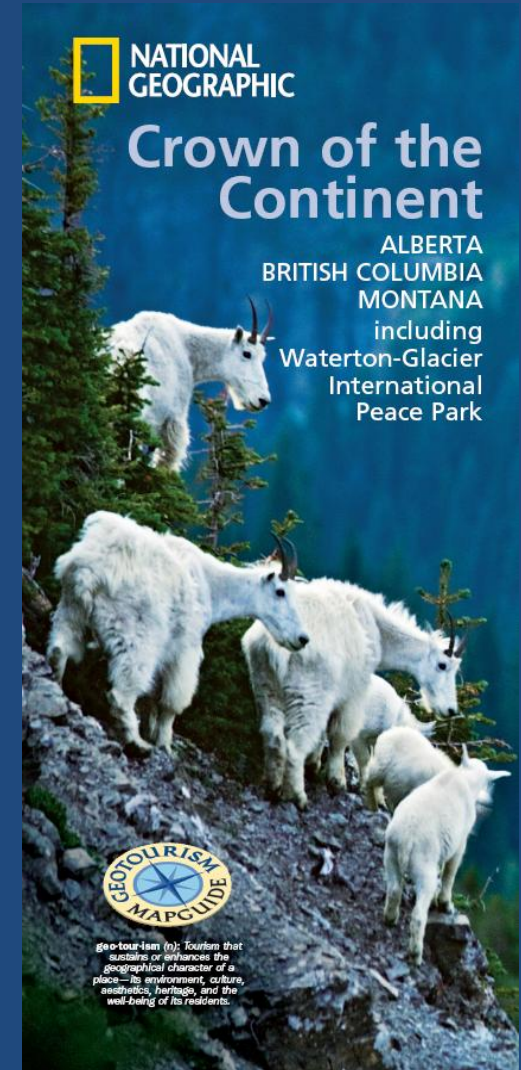
# What is the Crown of the Continent?

- One of the world's most diverse temperate ecosystems
- Ecological Crossroads
- 16,000 square miles
  - 18 million acres
- Transboundary tribal heritage
- First International Peace Park
- Two World Heritage Sites
- A Destination without Borders



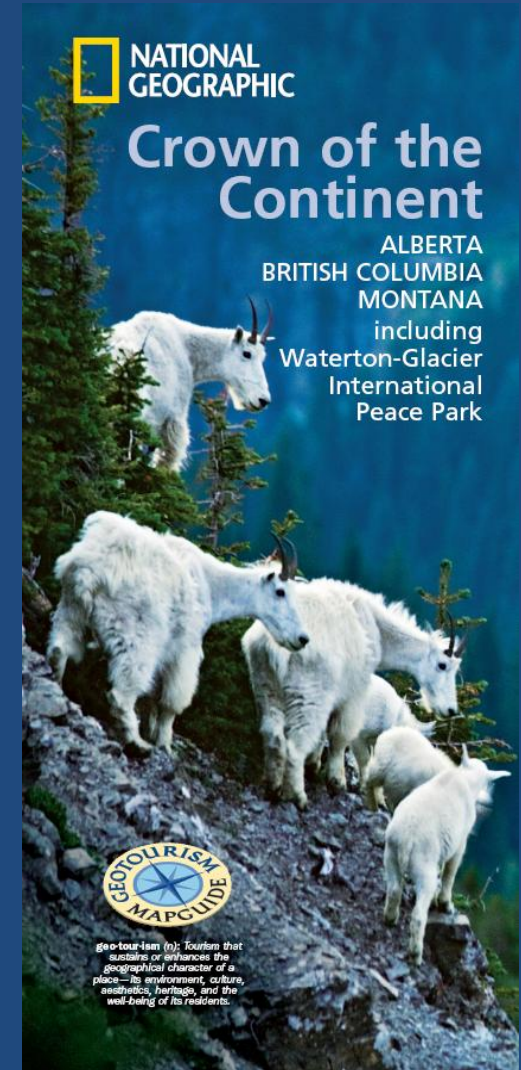
# Project History

- Stewardship Council formed in 2007
- MapGuide and website completed in 2008
- 53 partner groups
- Tourism bureaus, businesses, educators, conservation & recreation groups, First Nations, government agencies



# Overarching Goals

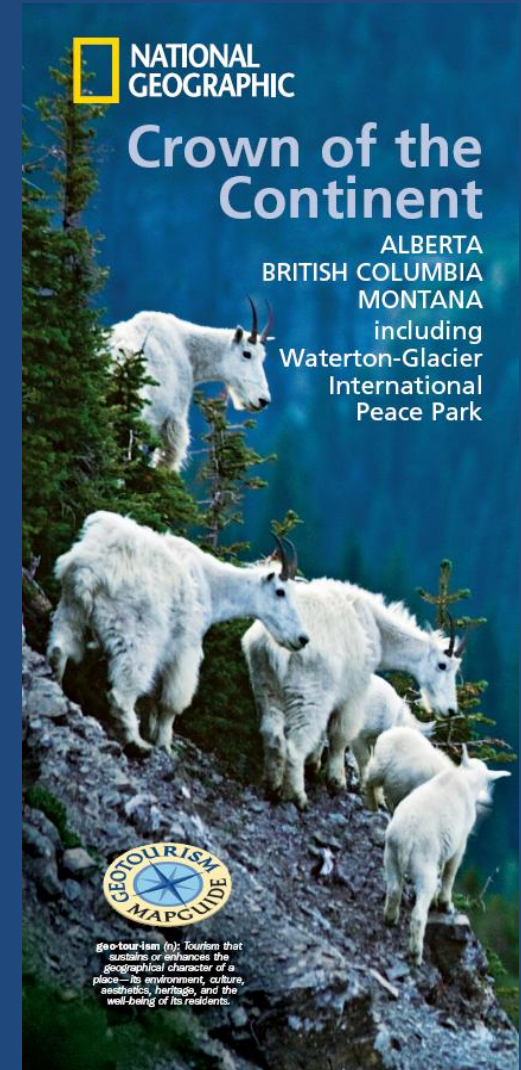
- Geotourism Business Development
- Stewardship
- Communication & Education
- Marketing
- Funding





# Project Successes

- 400,000+ MapGuides distributed
- 62,059 unique website visitors (2012) from over 60 countries
- 16,000 e-news subscribers
- New 2013-2016 Strategic Plan
- Engaged Executive Committee
  - Tourism, Economic Development, Conservation



# Marketing

- MapGuide, Website, Social Media
- Website Sponsorships
- Cross-linking with other geotourism projects
- Visitmt.com
- National Geographic Maps website



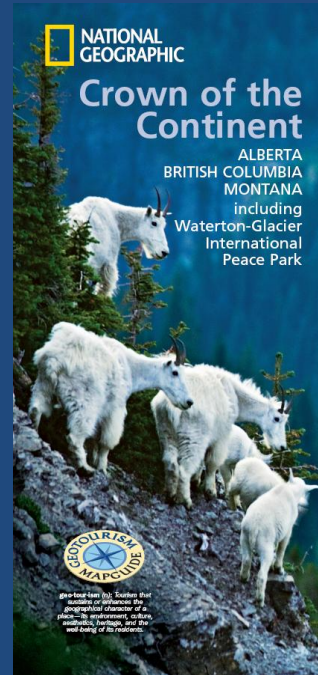
# Collaborative Efforts

- Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent
  - Economic Forum
- Top 10 Scenic Drives of the Northern Rockies
  - Buses 4 Byways Transportation Study
- Yellowstone Business Partnership (YBP)
  - Geotourism Co-op Study
  - UnCommon Sense Business Leadership Program
- National Geotourism Council (NGC)
- Research Institutions
  - University of Montana
  - Duke University

# Geotourism MapGuide Usage Assessment

How did the MapGuide influence your trip?

- Natural Landmark (59%)
- Choice of travel route (50%)
- Visitors Center (45%)
- Purchase or eat locally grown food (38%)
- Where to spend the night (37%)
- Extend their trip (30%)
- Donated to local causes (7%)
- *Users spent 6.25 nights, non-users spent 5.41 nights*





# Greater Yellowstone



# Project History

- Spring 2007: Project Initiation by NGS and tourism offices of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming
- Spring 2008: Mapguide Development Began
- Fall 2008: Convening of the Greater Yellowstone Geotourism Stewardship Council to review mapguide nominations and organize content of the mapguide
- Spring 2009: Launch mapguide and website
- Summer 2012: Develop Greater Yellowstone Geotourism MOU and organization
- Present: Project implementation: distribution of Mapguides; content development and management of website

# Project Status

- 560,500 Mapguides printed; 80%+ distributed
- 168 Sites and Events on the website ([www.yellowstonegeotourism.org](http://www.yellowstonegeotourism.org))
- Greater Yellowstone Geotourism Stewardship Council and Steering Committee meet as needed
- Funding: from Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming tourism offices for Mapguide printing and website hosting and maintenance. From Idaho USDA RD for coordinating the GYG Program, assessing a tri-state fishing license feasibility, and research the development of a geotourism co-op

# Collaborative Efforts

- Top 10 Scenic Drives of the Northern Rockies
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# Project Impacts

- The Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) conducted a survey of Greater Yellowstone Mapguide users:
- Some of the respondents were influenced by the MapGuide to extend their trip and *four percent* indicated that they stayed two or more nights because of the guide.
- About half of the respondents said the MapGuide influenced their choice of travel routes and about *a quarter* were influenced in their choice of where to spend their nights.
- Forty-one percent of people who used one of the guides visited a natural landmark because they saw it on the MapGuide. Visitor centers were chosen by 35 percent of “users” as a site they visited because they had seen it on the MapGuide and *25 percent* cited historic sites.
- Thirteen percent of “users” of the MapGuide indicated that they were prompted by the MapGuide to purchase locally grown food.
- ITRR Conclusion: “The Greater Yellowstone MapGuide appears to be an influential tool on the choices many visitors make for visiting the area. The findings of this suggest that the Geotourism concept, as portrayed by the MapGuide, is a successful tool in visitor management.



# National Geotourism Council

- Vision: Empowers destinations to share stories of people and places that instills reverence for landscapes and culture that stimulates prosperity in America.
- Members:
  - 8 Geotourism Stewardship Councils
  - 3 Industry Partners

# NGC Objectives

- (1) Inspire travelers to discover real America
- (2) Reaffirm U.S. conservation leadership
- (3) Further the NGS mission on the ground., bringing the brand to the people.
- (4) Ensure geotourism projects are supported by leading industry innovation over time
- (5) Create jobs in rural America through sustainable tourism
- (6) Foster civic engagement
- (7) Build pride regionally and within communities
- (8) Build the capacity of the NGC

# Geotourism Stewardship Councils

- Crown of the Continent (2008)
- Greater Yellowstone (2008)
- Redwoods Coast (2009)
- Central Cascades (2010)
- Lakes to Locks Passage (2010)
- Sierra Nevada (2010)
- Eastern Tennessee River Valley (2011)
- Four Corners (2012)



# NGC Outreach via GSCs\*

- Total Sites Represented = 5,257
- Businesses = 1,429
- State/Provincial Parks = 87
- National Parks/Monuments/Sites = 53
- Museums = 385
- Events = 569

\*As of October 2012

# GSC Outreach Tools\*

- 6 Mapguides = over 1.2 million distributed
- 2 Mobile Applications
- 8 Web Site Totals:
  - Active Contributors = 3,895
  - Content/Page Views = 181,093 (monthly avg)
  - Visitors = 73,823 (monthly avg)
  - International Visitors = 117+ countries
  - Subscribers = 28,836

\*As of October 2012

# NGC Activities

- Developing and sustaining strategic private and public partnerships, including DOC, DOI, DOA, and Western Governors Association
- Developed input to National Travel & Tourism Strategy via DOI
- Tracking and evaluating the performance of Geotourism projects individually & collectively
- Creating a platform for a network of local Geotourism councils which facilitates mutual capacity building, marketing co-ops, and dissemination of good practices
- National Online Geotourism Atlas (NOGA) being developed to rapidly direct world-wide visitors to individual Geotourism websites, and local sites and events

# UnCommon Sense

*Business Leadership for a Sustainable Future*





# UnCommon Sense

- Started in 2007
- Equips businesses to make and track operational changes
- 2 year sustainable business implementation program
- 5 “graduation” classes
- Efficient business operations save MONEY!



# UnCommon Sense: Bottom Line

## Buffalo Bill Historical Center

- \$7000 annual savings by 90% reduction in trash bag use, employees empty own trash when full rather than having janitors empty each night
- \$20,000 savings per year by replacing disposable cups, plates and silverware with reusable items, 40% cost savings by switching to 100% recycled content paper towels and toilet paper

## Grand Targhee Ski Resort

- Saved 17% on utility bills (below the previous 5-year's average), avoided \$35,000 in utility costs, most by implementing programs focused on behavior change.



# UnCommon Sense: Crown of the Continent

- Crown businesses currently enrolled
- Crown of the Continent version starts Spring 2014
- First program in the region



**WHITEFISH**

MOUNTAIN RESORT

EST. 1943 - WHITEFISH, MONTANA



*You won't know if you don't go!*

# Business Sustainability

- Sustainable Tourism Education Program (STEP) by Sustainable Travel International
  - Sustainability management framework
  - Self assessment of sustainability
  - Verification and certification by STI
  - Recognition and promotion
- STEP Consultant & Assessor Training in Nov 2012
  - Produced 15 persons qualified to consult for and assess businesses



# Sustainable Travel Research

- Center for Responsible Travel published research in January 2013 on travel trends:
  - Documented consumer demand, business and destination case for responsible tourism
  - A 2012 TripAdvisor Member Survey found that the green travel trend is gaining momentum with 71% saying they plan to make more eco-friendly choices in the next 12 months compared to 65% that did so in the past 12 months

# Sustainable Travel Research

- A 2010 Global Business Travel Association and IMEX Global Survey found more than 51% of meeting planners will hold meetings only in sustainable venues
- According to a 2012 Nielsen Wire Survey:
  - Two thirds (66%) of consumers around the world say they prefer to buy products and services from companies that have implemented programs to give back to society.
  - 46% are willing to pay extra for products and services from socially responsible companies, and a majority (51%) of those under 40 are willing to do so

# Questions?

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Dylan Boyle

(406) 599-7929

[dylan@crownofthecontinent.net](mailto:dylan@crownofthecontinent.net)

# Website Resources

- [www.crownofthecontinent.net](http://www.crownofthecontinent.net)
- [www.yellowstonegeotourism.org](http://www.yellowstonegeotourism.org)
- [www.yellowstonebusiness.org](http://www.yellowstonebusiness.org)
- [www.drivethetop10.com](http://www.drivethetop10.com)
- [www.crownroundtable.org](http://www.crownroundtable.org)
- [www.itrr.umt.edu](http://www.itrr.umt.edu)